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Activities not classified by field: dissemination of statistics by the United Nations Statistics Division

Dissemination of statistics by the United Nations Statistics Division

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared at the request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-second session.**

Dissemination policy for United Nations publications (including electronic products and via the Internet) is established by the United Nations Publications Board, which also approves the biennial publications programme based on mandates from intergovernmental bodies. Various intergovernmental bodies which have discussed dissemination, including the budget and programme committees, the Committee on Information and the Committee on Conferences, have repeatedly emphasized the importance of ensuring economy, quality, relevance and cost recovery in United Nations publications. Most of the United Nations Statistics Division publications of statistics are based on Statistical Commission mandates from the 1940s and 1950s, which have been periodically reviewed by the Commission and evaluated by user groups to ensure their continuing relevance.

According to official policy, free dissemination of publications is made to Member States' missions to the United Nations, the United Nations libraries and United Nations depository libraries, and the United Nations Statistics Division's partners in the global statistical system, i.e., national and international statistical services. The sale of publications is the responsibility of the Sales and Marketing Section of the Division of Publications of the United Nations Secretariat. United

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** See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2001, Supplement No. 4* (E/2001/24), chap. I, sect. A.

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Nations Statistics Division publications of statistics are the Section's largest revenue earners, accounting for more than one third of the gross revenue of the United Nations from sales of Secretariat publications.

The United Nations Statistics Division pioneered the development of CD-ROM publications in the Secretariat and is continuously seeking to expand their coverage. The Division has also actively developed statistics dissemination on its Internet site, but with the Internet still in a stage of rapid technological development and the totally different expectations that users bring to Internet as far as pricing and ease of use are concerned, neither the Organization nor the Division has reached a clear consensus on an effective pricing policy.

Points for discussion by the Commission are contained in paragraph 37.

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I. Responsibility for dissemination policies

A. Publications Board

1. The dissemination of United Nations Statistics Division publications, including CD-ROM and Internet materials, is guided by publications policies established for the United Nations Secretariat as a whole. Those policies are determined by the Publications Board, which is made up of representatives of the principal author departments, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, of which the Statistics Division is a part, and of the Department of Public Information, the Department of Conference Services, the Department of Administration and Management and the Office of Legal Affairs.

2. The Board's mandate is to plan and supervise the execution of the biennial publications programme of the organization, plan the allocation of the budget for external publications and the allocation of internal reproduction capacity, and determine policies concerning such issues as copyright, dissemination, attribution of authorship, permission to outside publishers to reproduce United Nations materials, including translation, use of the United Nations emblem, and the designation of United Nations depository libraries. The Board meets infrequently, as the need for major policy decisions arises, as well as to approve reports and recommendations on the biennial publications programme, the United Nations depository libraries and the Sales and Marketing Section etc., as needed. Since December 1992, the Board's secretariat has been located in the Department of Public Information.

3. The routine administrative and executive functions of the Board are delegated to the Board's Working Committee, which meets monthly. The Committee is chaired by the director of the Library and Information Resources Division, Department of Public Information. A new working group on Internet matters has recently been established, also responsible to the Publications Board, and chaired by the director of the Information Technology Section, Department of Public Information. This group is mandated to coordinate United Nations Secretariat and Internet sites and home pages (see ST/AI/2002/5). As it has only recently been established, its functions and responsibilities have yet to be worked out in practice.

B. Legislative mandates for recurrent publications

4. The intergovernmental mandates for statistics dissemination are set by the Statistical Commission and cover recurrent printed publications, CD-ROMs databases and Internet. The mandates are currently reviewed every two years as part of the review of the United Nations Statistics Division work plan. That practice was cited in a 1993 report of the Secretary-General on publications policy to the Fifth (budget) Committee of the General Assembly as "an appropriate model for other bodies" (see A/C.5/48/30, para. 14). It is now recommended to the other functional commissions as part of the process of preparing the budget and publications programme.

5. The original general Statistical Commission mandate for the compilation and dissemination of international statistics is set out below.

Publication of statistics

6. International publications relating to statistics, regular and occasional, will be a normal and useful consequence of the collection and analysis of statistics from member Governments, specialized agencies and other sources for the various organs, departments and divisions of the United Nations (see report of the Statistical Commission on its first (nuclear) session (E/39), paras. 33 and 41).

7. The mandates of specific recurrent publications are as follows:

(a) The *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, the *Statistical Yearbook*, and the yearbooks of industrial statistics, trade statistics and energy supplies were previously compiled and published by the League of Nations. The Commission, at its first (nuclear) session, recommended that action be taken promptly to ensure maintenance without interruption of the valuable statistical work of the Economic, Financial and Transit Department of the League of Nations and of other statistical activities carried on under the sponsorship of the League (see E/39, para. 5). The Commission also noted, with respect to the recommended maintenance by the United Nations Statistics Division of an international centre for statistics, that the end in view was that of making generally available non-confidential statistics pertaining to international affairs and not merely of establishing a routine international

documentation service (see E/39, para. 41). That recommendation was accepted by the General Assembly in its resolution of 12 February 1946 on the transfer of League functions, activities and assets to the United Nations (see A/64, p. 35), and by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 23 (III) of 2 October 1946;

(b) *Demographic Yearbook* and *Population and Vital Statistics Report*: in 1948, the Statistical Commission recommended that demographic data concerning the different countries of the world be assembled and published by the United Nations (see E/264, para. 43);

(c) National accounts: also in 1948, the Commission recommended that publication of national income and expenditure data be undertaken promptly in order to provide comparable figures for as many countries as possible (see E/264, para. 42);

(d) *Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics*: originally published beginning in 1971 as the Compendium of Housing Statistics. At its sixteenth session, in 1970, the Commission approved the United Nations Statistics Division programme of work to include the international publication of results of population and housing censuses (see E/4938, para. 114 (27)). Coverage was broadened in the third issue in response to General Assembly resolution 34/114 on a regular global report on human settlements and the endorsement of the Statistical Commission at its twenty-first session (see E/1981/12, para. 116);

(e) *World Statistics Pocketbook*: undertaken in response to General Assembly resolution 2626 (XXV) on the Second International Development Decade. The *Pocketbook* responds to the Assembly's request to supply adequate basic national data to increase international public awareness of countries' development efforts;

(f) *Energy Balances and Electricity Profiles*: the regular issuance of this new publication was approved by the Statistical Commission at its twentieth session, in 1979, on the basis of recommendations of the Expert Group on Classification and Measurement in the Field of Energy Statistics (see E/1979, paras. 15 and 23 (a)). That recommendation was affirmed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1981/2, on international energy statistics.

8. In response to the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in its report on recurrent publications of the United Nations (JIU/REP/71/8), the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1713 (LIII), affirmed the necessity of continuing the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* and the *Statistical Yearbook* in their current form, as recommended by the Statistical Commission's Working Group on International Statistical Programmes and Coordination at its fourth session. The Statistical Commission, at its seventeenth session, in 1972, supported the recommendations of the Working Group and reaffirmed the importance of the statistics publications in the Statistical Office's programme of work (E/5236, paras. 173 and 180).

II. United Nations Statistics Division publications, 2000-2001

9. The printed publications, electronic outputs and Internet home pages prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division and issued in 2000-2001 for the dissemination of statistics are listed in annexes II and III; all are contained in the biennial publications programme as approved by the Publications Board, and the dissemination policies set out below are applicable to them.

A. Free distribution of printed books and CD-ROMs

10. Pursuant to established dissemination policy, all United Nations Statistics Division print publications are distributed by the Organization free of charge to United Nations Member States' missions in New York, libraries of specialized agencies and United Nations centres, and United Nations depository libraries, amounting to approximately 600 copies. In addition, the Division distributes publications free of charge to a mailing list of its national and international partners in international data collection, for additional free distribution. All other United Nations offices may request single copies of specific publications on an ad hoc basis, free of charge.

11. Partly in response to severe public and media criticism in the 1980s of the quantity and relevance of United Nations publications, the General Assembly's Committee on Information and Committee on Conferences have urged that free distribution be

limited so as to meet legitimate official needs for publications at the working level, while maintaining a potential for earning revenues through sales. The objectives should be to maximize sales and minimize duplication in the distribution of documents.

12. In principle, therefore, free distribution is limited to the recipients described above, plus working copies for the author departments. Copies for conferences, training and similar demands for multiple copies are to be printed using additional funding to cover the costs involved. Accordingly, the United Nations Statistics Division usually requests about 200 copies for its own use, in addition to its mailing list. Reprints of publications are arranged, if needed, on a user-purchase basis.

13. Most United Nations Statistics Division CD-ROMs are distributed at no charge to United Nations system libraries and major reference centres and to national and international statistical services. They are also available free of charge to any United Nations system office on request and to missions to the United Nations.

B. CD-ROM sales

14. The United Nations Statistics Division was one of the first units of the Secretariat to prepare CD-ROMs for sales, including for several years the *Statistical Yearbook* and *Women's Indicators and Statistics Database*, the *Trade Analysis System, Five-year Time Series* (prepared by the International Trade Centre as a joint product with the Statistics Division) and more recently the *Demographic Yearbook Historical Supplement*. Those CD-ROMs have been prepared using interface software developed by or with the Division. Sales of CD-ROMs have been modest but appear to be growing from year to year, and currently number in the several hundreds for each issue of most products. The Publications Sales and Marketing Section provided extensive development funding for several of those products.

C. Sales and marketing services

15. Sales of publications is the responsibility of the Publications Sales and Marketing Section, which is expected to be self-supporting. The Sales and Marketing Section cooperates with the United Nations Statistics Division in the promotion of statistical publications and in user surveys.

16. Approximately 36 per cent of gross sales revenue of the Sales and Marketing Section derives from United Nations Statistics Division publications (about $1.8 million per year). The greatest revenue earners are the *Statistical Yearbook*, the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, the *Demographic Yearbook* and (at a much lower level) the various other yearbooks of trade statistics, energy statistics, industrial commodities production and national accounts.

17. By far the bulk of orders are standing orders from libraries in North America and Western Europe, but the number of orders from Asia has been increasing significantly in recent years.

III. Pricing policy

A. Print publications

18. The United Nations Finance Manual states that the sales operation as a whole is intended to provide a profit to the Organization if that can be achieved without adversely affecting the dissemination to the public.

19. According to the latest administrative instruction for the pricing of United Nations publications, prices are no longer to be based solely on printing costs but also take into account other costs, such as marketing, design and editing, as well as market and industry circumstances and the quality and content of the publication from the viewpoint of market appeal (see ST/AI/189/Add.15/Rev.1).

B. CD-ROMs and databases

20. The pricing of CD-ROMs has generally followed the same practice. Similarly, databases and data extracts sold directly by the United Nations Statistics Division follow that practice but the revenues accrue to the Division's revenue account. The main source of income on that account is extracts from the Commodity Trade Statistics Database (COMTRADE) and dial-up access to COMTRADE in Geneva. The other database sales of the Division are ad hoc. Those databases are not provided with a user interface. The United Nations maintains copyright of those databases and negotiates

permission to redisseminate data from them. The standard price for such dissemination rights is five times the purchase price. To date, the general practice is not to grant such permission for Internet dissemination to third parties.

C. Internet materials

21. Official publications policy calls for consultation with the Sales Section when any publication is planned to be put on the Internet in order to protect the Organization's commercial interest in the material, where such an interest is deemed to exist (see ST/AI/189/Add.28 and ST/AI/2001/5).

22. The Sales and Marketing Section has provided significant financial support for the development of United Nations Statistics Division CD-ROMs and Internet publications (*Monthly Bulletin of Statistics Online, UNSTATS Common Database* and *Population and Vital Statistics Report* (quarterly)); accordingly, no attempt has been made until recently to allocate some of the revenue to the Division's revenue account. However, the Division has recently agreed on a revenue-sharing agreement for *UNSTATS Common Database* subscriptions, subject to administrative review.

23. In addition to the large dissemination databases on Internet (*Monthly Bulletin of Statistics Online* and the *UNSTATS Common Database*), the Division maintains several more specialized data files on the Internet which are free, such as data on social indicators and city populations. Plans are also under development to make specific extracts from the large databases freely available, such as the Millennium indicators, as country profiles from *UNSTATS*.

24. Consideration is also being given to license a commercial information service to make print publications of statistics available in a non-data base, in a page view format similar to PDF.

IV. User evaluation

25. In the last decade, the United Nations Statistics Division and the Sales and Marketing Section have cooperated on several user evaluation studies, covering the *Demographic Yearbook*, the *Statistical Yearbook*, the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, several of the Division's CD-ROMs and the *UNSTATS Common Database* on the Internet (see ESA/STAT/AC.46/1).

26. Since most of the Division's publications are provided to the public via intermediaries, such as librarians and documentalists, or are sold via commercial wholesalers (largely the case in Europe), it is difficult to identify actual users and uses. The evaluation and planning studies conducted have mainly worked with experienced reference librarians, requesting them to comment on interfaces for electronic products and to solicit the views of their own clients. Such indirect feedback has been important for streamlining presentation and interfaces and providing some general views on content but does not provide a reliable guide for marketing as a whole.

27. The only general guides available are the sales of publications and, more recently, the emergence of access measurements for Internet pages.

28. The information contained in annex II on publication sales has been provided by the Sales and Marketing Section as of 1 November 2001. However, the concepts and methods for measuring Internet use are still quite simplistic and disputed, often by orders of magnitude.

A. Print publications sales and revenue[1]

29. Two of the nine best-selling substantive publications of the Organization in 1998-1999 were prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, the *Statistical Yearbook* and the *Demographic Yearbook*. Because of the much higher unit prices of United Nations Statistics Division yearbooks compared to most publications with significant sales, 10 of the 15 top revenue earners were from the Statistics Division: in order of gross revenue, the *Statistical Yearbook*, the *Demographic Yearbook*, the *International Trade Statistics Yearbook*, the *Statistical Yearbook CD-ROM*, the *National Accounts Statistics Yearbook*, the *Energy Statistics Yearbook* and the *Industrial Commodities Statistics Yearbook*. In addition, two of the three serial publications with the largest number of subscribers are prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division — the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics* and the *Population and Vital Statistics Report*. The largest revenue earner was the *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*.

B. Internet sites and page views

30. The quantification of Internet site traffic is complex and controversial. Page views, hits (especially the latter) and other measures are subject to various interpretations and qualifications, and are generally believed to inflate real user traffic or actual use. The United Nations Statistics Division has several important databases at its site and the quantification of those page views poses additional technical and interpretation problems.

31. Data provided on page views in annex III are based on access logs. An attempt has been made to exclude search site "spider" page views, which are automatically controlled by search engines, so as to measure database use and consolidate certain areas of the site dealing with a single subject without double-counting, given that repeat users may bookmark a page "behind" the home page which is being measured for direct access. The figures are for one month, July or September 2001.

32. The most heavily used sites (in terms of number of hits) for statistics and related references, according to that information, are the following:

(a) Social indicators data pages — 28,537;

(b) Population of capital cities and cities of 100,000 and more inhabitants data pages with maps — 26,387;

(c) Statistics Division home page, 24,713, and UNSD Publications Catalogue — 17,366;

(d) "Global statistics" home page — 16,138;

(e) InfoNation and Country at a Glance database (prepared by the Department of Public Information from the *World Statistics Pocketbook*) — 13,347;

(f) *UNSTATS UN Common Database*, data, (subscriber access only) — 13,330; metadata (free access) — 5,966.

33. The six sites mentioned in paragraph 32 above accounted for about 145,000 page views in the month studied. The remaining sites for statistics and related references, with over 4,000 page views in the reference month are the following:

(a) *Monthly Bulletin Statistics Online* (subscriber access only) — 7,979;

(b) International statistics links and reference — 6,501;

(c) *Population and Vital Statistics Report* (subscriber access only) — 6,176;

(d) Country and region codes for statistical use — 6,048;

(e) National data sources and links — 4,402;

(f) *World's Women 2000* data pages — 4,085.

34. The six sites mentioned in paragraph 33 above account for approximately 35,000 additional page views. The remaining, more active-Statistics Division statistics sites, not including demonstrations sites, include the home page (24,713) the Division's publications catalogue (17,366), international statistical links and references (6,501), national data sources and links (4,402) and population and housing census dates (2,000).

V. Multilingualism

35. It is a long-standing practice of the United Nations Statistics Division to publish statistical compilations in bilingual formats, English/French, pursuant to the mandate of the General Assembly to promote multilingualism in publications. The publications programme provides for translations, as needed, and some of the publication questionnaires are circulated in Spanish and Russian as well as English and French. Conventionally, for technical reasons, data compilations are issued in bilingual form, English/French.

36. The General Assembly has also asked that all Internet materials of the Organization be made available in all official languages. General United Nations web sites are prepared in all languages by the Department of Public Information but do not cover technical departmental publications or materials. Currently, language versions of Internet materials are rarely available from the author departments, and there are formidable budgetary, logistical and technical problems to be overcome in doing so. In the meantime, that gap is very partially alleviated by the web sites of the regional commissions, which use extensively a language other than English (French and to a lesser extent Russian and Spanish in Europe; Spanish in Latin America and the Caribbean; Arabic in Western Asia).

VI. Points for discussion

37. The Commission may wish to:

(a) Discuss experience and plans in countries and organizations with new dissemination policies and cost-recovery programmes, among other issues;

(b) Reaffirm the importance of the established print, electronic and Internet publications programmes for statistics, as detailed in annexes I-III;

(c) Reaffirm the commitment of the United Nations Statistics Division, as expressed in its 2002-2003 work programme, which the Commission endorsed at its thirty-second session, in 2001, to establish statistical databases in all the fields of competence of the Division, accessible through Internet;

(d) Suggest directions for the future in the dissemination of statistics.

Notes

[1] See "Report on the sale of publications 1998-1999", report to the Publications Board by the Sales and Marketing Section.

Annex I

List of administrative instructions on publications policy

Copyright in United Nations publications; general principles, practice and procedure (ST/AI/189/Add.6/Rev.4)

Covers and title pages of publications (ST/AI/189/Add.2)

Guidelines for publishing in an electronic format (ST/AI/189/Add.28)

Initiation, approval and execution of the United Nations biennial publications programme (ST/AI/189/Add.1/Rev.2)

Newsletters and other information materials in printed or electronic format (ST/AI/189/Add.19/Rev.1)

Pricing of United Nations publications (ST/AI/189/Add.15/Rev.1)

Principles governing the exchange of United Nations documents and publications (ST/AI/189/Add.4/Rev.1)

Principles governing United Nations depository libraries (ST/AI/189/Add.1/Rev.2)

United Nations Internet publishing (ST/AI/2001/5)

Use of the United Nations emblem on documents and publications (ST/AI/189/Add.21)

Annex II

United Nations statistical compilations prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division and released in 2000-2001

Print compilations and sales up to 1 November 2001

Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics 2001, 254 pp., $35, 142 copies

Demographic Yearbook 1998, 618 pp., $150, 2,445 copies

Energy Statistics Yearbook 1997, 570 pp. $100, 721 copies

Industrial Commodity Statistics Yearbook 1997, 921 pp., $115, 705 copies

Industrial Commodity Statistics Yearbook 1998, 907 pp., $115, 624 copies

International Trade Statistics Yearbook 1998, vol. I, 1,101 pp.; vol. II, 406 pp., $135, 1,548 copies

International Trade Statistics Yearbook 1999, vols. I and II, forthcoming

Monthly Bulletin of Statistics, annual subscription $525, $60 per copy, 1,096 copies

National Accounts Statistics: Main Aggregates and Detailed Tables, 1995, two volumes, 2,680 pp., $160, 997 copies

National Accounts Statistics: Main Aggregates and Detailed Tables, 1996-1997, two volumes, 3,752 pp., $160, 867 copies

Statistical Yearbook, forty-third issue, 899 pp., $125, 3,188 copies

Statistical Yearbook, forty-fourth issue, 879 pp., $125, 3,105 copies

Population and Vital Statistics Report (quarterly), annual subscription: $30; $10 per copy, 352 copies

World Statistics Pocketbook 1999, 237 pp., $10, 1,850 copies

World Statistics Pocketbook 2000, 239 pp., $10, 587 copies

The World's Women: Trends and Statistics, 200 pp., $16.95, 3,821 copies

Electronic

Demographic Yearbook, forty-ninth issue, *Historical Supplement 1948-1997*, CD-ROM, $149, 583 copies

Energy Statistics Database, 1950-1997 (ad hoc orders), $390

External Trade Statistics, from 1962 to present (ad hoc orders for extracts), $50 + $5 for each 1,000 elements up to 500,000 elements, and $2.50 for each 1,000 elements in excess of 500,000 elements

Industrial Statistics, part 1, *Commodity Production Statistics, 1958-1998* (ad hoc orders), $500

National Accounts Statistics, part 1, *Main Aggregates and Detailed Tables, 1970-1997* (ad hoc orders), $600

National Accounts Statistics, part 2, *Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Tables, 1970-1998* (ad hoc orders), $600 or $100 first file, $75 each additional

Statistical Yearbook, forty-fourth issue, CD-ROM, $199, 234 copies

Statistical Yearbook, forty-fifth issue, CD-ROM, $199, 48 copies

Trade Analysis System on Personal Computer 1995-1999, CD-ROM, *Harmonized System* or *SITC Rev.3*, five-year time series (1995-1999) of international trade statistics, with market share and trend analyses by country and product, jointly with the International Trade Centre, $900 for developed countries, $450 for developing countries and economies in transition

Women's Indicators and Statistics Database, Version 4, CD-ROM, $149, 335 copies

Annex III

Statistics and related references on the Internet and estimated page views, one month

Type of data	*Number of page views*
Disability statistics	1 902
InfoNation and Country at a Glance (with the Department of Public Information, based on *World Statistics Pocketbook*)	13 347
Monthly Bulletin of Statistics	
Online (monthly, subscriber access)	7 979
Demonstration version (free access)	15 530
Population and Vital Statistics Report (quarterly, subscriber access)	6 176
Population of capital cities and cities of 100,000 and more inhabitants (annual)	26 387
Social indicators (updated quarterly)	28 537
UNSTATS UN Common Database (updated quarterly)	
Data (subscriber access)	13 330
Metadata (free access)	5 966
Demonstration version (free access)	7 614
World's Women 2000	4 085
Home pages on the Internet for statistical sources (ad hoc updating)	
Industrial Statistics Yearbook (commodities list)	1 375
International statistics links and references for international statistics	6 501
National data sources and links	4 402
National publications and statistical yearbooks, current statistics and Internet sites	1 081
United Nations Statistics Division	24 713
Population and housing census dates, 1985-2004	2 000
United Nations Economic and Social Information System methods and data dictionary	1 150
United Nations Statistics Division publications (catalogue database)	17 366

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Activities not classified by field: coordination and integration of statistical programmes

Report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-fifth session

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the Statistical Commission the report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-fifth session (Vienna, 18-20 September 2001). The report is transmitted to the commission in accordance with a request of the Statistical Commission at its thirty-second session.** In its discussion under relevant agenda items, the Commission may wish to take into account the views expressed by the Subcommittee, which may be reviewed below as follows:

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Report of the Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-fifth session

Vienna, 18-20 September 2001

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IV. Letter dated 25 June 2001 from the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division to the Secretary of ACC, responding to the new approaches advocated by the High-level Committee on Programmes 18

I. Introduction

1. The Subcommittee on Statistical Activities held its thirty-fifth session in Vienna from 18 to 20 September 2001. The agenda is contained in annex I, the list of participants in annex II and the list of documents in annex III.

II. Matters for endorsement or approval of the High-level Committee on Programmes

2. The following matters are brought to the attention of the High-level Committee on Programmes. The Subcommittee:

(a) Took note of five major new initiatives planned by organizations and the coordination involved in them (see para. 10 below);

(b) Decided to take steps to improve the coordination of data sets that may be disseminated by different organizations covering the same subject matter (see para. 14 below);

(c) Adopted principles for disseminating statistics on the Internet (see paras. 15 and 16 below);

(d) Welcomed the efforts of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Population Division to harmonize their estimation methods on adult mortality (see paras. 17 and 18 below);

(e) Identified issues that the Statistical Commission may wish to discuss (see paras. 20-22 below);

(f) Provided comments on the report of the Friends of the Chair of the Statistical Commission entitled "An assessment of the statistical indicators derived from United Nations Summit meetings" (see para. 23 below);

(g) Commented on the work and plans of the United Nations Statistics Division relating to the review of global progress towards the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (see para. 25 below);

(h) Took steps to review reported instances of duplication in statistical data collection from countries (see paras. 26 and 27 below);

(i) Endorsed the contents of the letter dated 25 June 2001 from the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division to the Secretary of the ACC, responding to the new approaches advocated by the High-level Committee on Programmes (see para. 34 below and annex IV);

(j) Made decisions concerning its own functioning and elected A. Flatt of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) as Chairman of the Subcommittee, with effect from the opening of the thirty-sixth session, in 2002 (see paras. 35-38 below);

(k) Adopted the provisional agenda for its thirty-sixth session, which it decided to hold at United Nations Headquarters from 17 to 19 September 2002 (see para. 39 below). The provisional agenda was agreed as follows:

Provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-sixth session of the Subcommittee

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

2. Matters arising from the thirty-fifth session of the Subcommittee.

   Documentation

   Note by the Secretariat on the follow-up to the thirty-fifth session of the Subcommittee

3. Major new initiatives planned by organizations.

   Documentation

   Notes by organizations

4. Issues related to the work of the task forces and inter-secretariat working groups.

   Documentation

   Reports of the Task Forces on Finance Statistics, International Merchandise Trade Statistics, Statistics of International Trade in Services and National Accounts, and of the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

5. Collection of disaggregated statistics from countries by international organizations.

Documentation

Report of the United Nations Children's Fund

6. Programme review of services statistics for the Statistical Commission for 2003.

7. Coordination of development indicators in the context of follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits.

Documentation

Report of the United Nations Statistics Division

8. Reporting on the review of global progress towards the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

Documentation

Report of the United Nations Statistics Division

9. Good practices in citation in the outputs of international statistical offices.

Documentation

Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

10. Duplication of data collection from countries.

Documentation

Report of the United Nations Statistics Division

11. Coordination of data sets disseminated by different organizations covering the same subject matter.

Documentation

Report of the United Nations Statistics Division

12. Issues relating to the assessment of the quality of statistical data in developing countries.

Documentation

Report of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

13. Quality assurance for statistics in international statistical services.

Documentation

Report of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

14. Other matters relating to the Statistical Commission.

15. Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections.

Documentation

Report of the Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections

16. Review of the ACC subsidiary machinery.

17. Other business.

18. Dates, place and agenda of the thirty-seventh session of the Subcommittee.

19. Report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-sixth session.

III. Work of the Subcommittee

A. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

3. The Subcommittee adopted the agenda as set out in annex I.

B. Adoption of the report of the Subcommittee on its thirty-fourth session

4. The Subcommittee adopted its report on its thirty-fourth session (see E/CN.3/2001/22).

C. Matters arising from the thirty-fourth session of the Subcommittee

5. The Subcommittee noted that all the matters requiring consideration were scheduled to be taken up under other items of its agenda, except for the three items discussed below, which the Subcommittee considered under this item.

1. Electronic commerce

6. The Subcommittee took note of the discussions on electronic commerce at a meeting of the International Statistical Institute held in Seoul, from 22 to 29 August 2001, and of the plans to include electronic commerce as an item on the agenda of the Statistical Commission in 2002, on the basis of papers to be prepared by several countries, with the objective of determining the best way to move work ahead at the international level on definitions and approaches to data collection on electronic commerce.

2. United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report

7. The Subcommittee noted that the Statistical Commission, at its thirty-second session, in 2001:

(a) Considered that the report of the Friends of the Chair of the Statistical Commission entitled "An assessment of the statistical criticisms made of the *Human Development Report 1999*"[1] (E/CN.3/2001/18) was thorough, balanced and fair;

(b) Welcomed the response of the Human Development Report Office to the report of the Friends of the Chair;

(c) Accepted the proposals made by the Office to submit a paper to the Commission at its thirty-third session on the needs of users of statistics of human development and on the implementation of the report of the Friends of the Chair.

8. The Subcommittee welcomed the oral report of the Office on the improvements it had made in the use and presentation of statistics in the *Report*, and welcomed the continuing efforts of the Office in that regard.

3. Tourism satellite account

9. The Subcommittee welcomed the positive response of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to the letter dated 25 June 2001 that it had received from the Chairman of the Subcommittee, at the request of the Subcommittee at its thirty-fourth session, expressing the concerns of the Subcommittee regarding the OECD publication *Measuring the Role of Tourism in OECD Economies: the OECD Manual on Tourism Satellite Accounts and Employment*[2] (see E/CN.3/2001/22, para. 20); the OECD response indicated that cooperation on tourism statistics between the World Tourism Organization and OECD is proceeding successfully. The Subcommittee noted that both OECD and the World Tourism Organization are optimistic about their future cooperation with each other and with other agencies on tourism statistics.

D. Major new initiatives planned by organizations

1. Industrial statistics database according to the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities, Revision 3[3] on CD-ROM (United Nations Industrial Development Organization)

2. Technical report on surveys in developing and transition countries (United Nations Statistics Division)

3. Establishing a joint United Nations Development Programme-Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific poverty monitoring project

4. International Monetary Fund update: reports on the observance of standards and codes and the data quality assessment framework

5. Strengthening statistical capacity in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region (United Nations Statistics Division and Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia)

6. Progress towards the 1996 World Food Summit target on the numbers of undernourished (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations)

10. The Subcommittee took note of the above initiatives and the coordination involved in them.

E. Proposed common questionnaire for organizations to collect data on expenditure by visitors in countries

11. Some concern was expressed as to whether an adequate range of countries and interested international organizations have been involved in the development of the proposed common questionnaire to date. However, the Subcommittee noted that the common questionnaire is intended to be an aid to countries and is not intended to be compulsory. The Subcommittee welcomed the draft, and considered that it provides a good basis for further cooperative development among organizations and countries.

F. Good practices in citation in the outputs of international statistical offices

12. The Subcommittee decided to include this item on the agenda for its thirty-sixth session; requested the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to prepare a report; and requested organizations to provide their views to UNESCO for that report.

G. Statistics part of the ACC programme classification

13. The Subcommittee agreed that the Classification of Statistics and Statistical Activities (previously referred to as the statistics part of the ACC programme classification) is correctly set out in ACC document SA/2001/9 (see also E/CN.3/2002/L.4, annex), reflecting the approval given by the Subcommittee at its thirty-third session (see E/CN.3/2000/19, para. 2 (b)).

H. Coordination of data sets that may be disseminated by different organizations covering the same subject matter

14. The Subcommittee agreed that this subject is important and complicated, covering many aspects of how international organizations collect, process and disseminate statistics and try to assure quality. The Subcommittee decided to include the item on the agenda of its thirty-sixth session; requested the United Nations Statistics Division to prepare a document on the subject; and invited organizations to provide inputs to the Division within three months, based on a structure that the Division would develop and distribute shortly.

I. Placing statistics on the Internet and associated pricing policy

15. The Subcommittee adopted the following principles for disseminating statistical information on the Internet:

(a) The home page should have links to available online statistical data, making the distinction between those available free of charge and those available through subscription;

(b) Statistical data should be presented on the basis of a set of statistical themes; the classification of Statistics and Statistical Activities (see E/CN.3/2002/L.4, annex) could provide such a set of themes;

(c) Publication catalogues should be included, making clear those publications that can be downloaded free of charge and those that can only be acquired by purchase;

(d) Information should be provided on the statistical activities of the organization, especially those involving coordinated/joint activities with other international organizations;

(e) Information should be provided about data quality;

(f) Meta-data should be made available free of charge and in a readily accessible form;

(g) Methodological publications, standards, recommendations and classifications should be made

available, as far as possible free of charge and in a readily accessible form;

(h) Good citation practice should be followed, particularly "version identification" for statistical data.

16. The Subcommittee considered that each organization should continue to set its own policies in relation to the pricing of statistics disseminated on the Internet, including on the extent to which data might be provided free of charge.

J. Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections

17. The Subcommittee received an oral report from WHO, which indicated that:

(a) WHO and the United Nations Population Division will prepare a joint paper for the ACC Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections (SCDEP) on common approaches and differences in methods that they use to create adult mortality estimates, with a view to harmonizing those methods;

(b) WHO and the Population Division have had several exchanges of information already and are much closer in terms of the estimates than before;

(c) The organizations consider it unhelpful to have divergent estimates;

(d) Goodwill exists to improve harmonization.

18. The Subcommittee welcomed the WHO report and its efforts and those of the Population Division to harmonize their estimation methods, and looked forward to the report of SCDEP on its June 2002 session.

K. Quality assurance for statistics in international statistical services

19. The Subcommittee recognized that the issue of quality assurance is important and very broad, and that further analysis to identify the dimensions of the issue of quality will help the Subcommittee to deal with it. The Subcommittee decided to include the item on the agenda of its thirty-sixth session and requested OECD to prepare a report that would:

(a) Review what has already been provided by members of the Subcommittee (see ACC documents SA/2000/10 and Add.1-11);

(b) Look at national experience;

(c) Develop a number of discussion points.

L. Identifying issues that the Statistical Commission may wish to discuss

20. The Subcommittee decided to include on the agenda for its thirty-sixth session an item on the collection of disaggregated statistics by international organizations (including the uses of disaggregated statistics and the reporting burdens on countries), at which time it will decide whether to propose its inclusion on the agenda of a future Statistical Commission session. The Subcommittee requested the United Nations Children's Fund to prepare a report on the subject for its thirty-sixth session.

21. The Subcommittee noted that the multi-year programme of work of the Statistical Commission already includes subject areas for which several Subcommittee members are responsible, namely, human settlements statistics, statistics of drugs and drug use, agricultural statistics, industrial statistics, tourism statistics and finance statistics.

22. The Subcommittee made the following suggestions concerning the draft multi-year programme of the work of the Commission:

(a) To add information and communications technology statistics;

(b) To include an item on the definition and measurement of the so-called information society sometime after 2002, with a document to be prepared by UNESCO.

M. Coordination of development indicators in the context of follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits

23. The Subcommittee welcomed the draft report of the Friends of the Chair of the Statistical Commission, entitled "An assessment of the statistical indicators derived from United Nations summit meetings", which was being prepared for the 2002 session of the

Statistical Commission. Members of the Subcommittee provided a range of comments expressing support for some aspects of the draft and concern about other aspects, and agreed to send any additional comments they might have to the Chairman of the Friends of the Chair by the end of September 2001 to allow completion of the report by early November 2001.

N. Experiences with user-producer dialogues

24. The Subcommittee took note of the experience of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Monetary Fund on the use of user-producer dialogues to improve the understanding between users and producers of statistical information concerning the increasing demands for statistical information and the limited capacity of producers to meet those demands.

O. Reporting on the review of global progress towards the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration

25. The Subcommittee noted the work and plans of the United Nations Statistics Division in this area set out in ACC document SA/2001/14; some agencies indicated that additional source agencies are relevant to a number of the targets listed in the document. The United Nations Statistics Division confirmed its intention to approach all the appropriate source agencies at an early stage in the process. Subcommittee members were invited to send any additional comments they might have on the plans and indicate their interest in being consulted on particular areas to Stefan Schweinfest of the United Nations Statistics Division.

P. Duplication of data collection from countries

26. The Subcommittee agreed on the list of organizations that would take the lead for each instance of duplication in data collection specified by countries in ACC document SA/2001/18 and Add.1 and 2. The lead organizations agreed to consult with the other organizations involved and provide a brief report to the United Nations Statistics Division covering the details of the data collection, their assessment as to whether duplication exists or not and the action agreed to by the organizations; the lead organizations agreed to provide the reports to the Division in time to allow it to prepare a consolidated report for the thirty-third session of the Statistical Commission, that is, by December 2001. The Subcommittee also agreed to consider the matter more broadly at its thirty-sixth session, based on the outcome of the current study, the views of the Statistical Commission, the range of points raised by the Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session and two previously issued documents on the coordination of data collection that the United Nations Statistics Division and the Economic Commission for Europe would circulate.[4]

27. The Subcommittee recognized that some statistical data collection from countries was carried out by divisions other than the statistical divisions of organizations, and re-endorsed previous decisions of the Subcommittee and the ACC system on that matter.[5]

Q. Coordination in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean region

28. The Subcommittee took note of the arrangements that were in place in the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean region.

R. Country participation in the World Programmes for the Census of Agriculture

29. The Subcommittee took note of the information provided by FAO on the programmes for the World Census of Agriculture, particularly country participation.

S. Issues related to the work of the task forces and intersecretariat working groups

1. Task Force on Finance Statistics

2. Task Force on International Trade Statistics

3. Task Force on National Accounts

4. Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services

5. Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics

30. The Subcommittee noted that there were no outstanding coordination issues for the attention of the Subcommittee.

T. Global integrated presentation of the work plans of the international organizations in statistical methodology

31. The Subcommittee noted the progress made on the web site of the global integrated presentation, particularly the establishment of links to the web sites of the author organizations for the "completed work" segment of the database, and the participation of the members of the Subcommittee in maintaining the content of the web site up to date.

U. Other matters relating to the Statistical Commission

32. The Subcommittee noted that, under other items of its agenda, the necessary collaboration on preparations for the thirty-third session of the Statistical Commission had been covered, namely, work on national accounts, price statistics, e-commerce, coordination of development indicators, statistics of human development and duplication in requests to countries for statistics. The Subcommittee received an update on the preparatory work on statistical capacity-building. The Subcommittee encouraged the necessary collaboration by Subcommittee members.

33. In respect of follow-up to the thirty-second session of the Statistical Commission, the Subcommittee noted that any necessary action that involved members of the Subcommittee had been covered under other agenda items of the Subcommittee, and that the *Handbook of Statistical Organization*[6] had been completed.

V. Review of the ACC subsidiary machinery

34. The Subcommittee endorsed the contents of the letter dated 25 June 2001 from the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division to the Secretary of ACC, responding to the new approaches advocated by the High-level Committee on Programmes that the Secretary of ACC had summarized in his letter of 3 May 2001 to the Director of the Division; the letter of the Director is set out in annex IV.

W. Functioning of the Subcommittee

35. The Subcommittee reviewed several aspects of its functioning, including the functioning of its Bureau. The Subcommittee recalled that the Bureau had been established at its twenty-seventh session, in 1993, on an experimental basis, with terms of reference to provide guidance to the overall work of the Subcommittee, including (a) to follow up the decisions of the Subcommittee session during the inter-meeting period, and (b) to plan the next session of the Subcommittee. The Bureau had also been established to see the Subcommittee through a transition in its organizational arrangements, which had included a change in the Chairmanship, a change in the length of its meetings and a change in reporting the outcomes of its meetings (see ACC/1993/1, para. 13). The Subcommittee considered that the Bureau had succeeded in its work. However, the Subcommittee considered that the Subcommittee membership is small enough for its Chairman and secretariat to consult between meetings with the full membership, as necessary, rather than through a (small) Bureau, especially through the use of email. The Subcommittee therefore decided to disband its Bureau.

36. The Subcommittee recognized that some papers for the Subcommittee's sessions were intended to share information; these should be clearly marked as such. Others were intended to provide a basis for discussion and action; these should be more action and decision oriented; in particular, it was thought that papers should contain proposals, recommendations or discussion points for the Subcommittee to consider and act on.

37. The Subcommittee noted the need to constantly try to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its work, and agreed that its work should continue to

include actions in between meetings, noting that under several agenda items of the current session, specific action was called for on the part of members. It was noted that additional hours on some days may be needed so as to give adequate coverage to all items on the agenda within the days agreed for the meetings.

38. The Subcommittee elected A. Flatt of ESCAP as Chairman, with effect from the opening of its thirty-sixth session, in 2002.

X. Dates, place and agenda of the thirty-sixth session of the Subcommittee

39. The Subcommittee adopted the provisional agenda for its thirty-sixth session (see para. 2 (k) above), which it decided to hold at United Nations Headquarters from 17 to 19 September 2002. The Subcommittee requested the Secretariat to distribute the provisional agenda six months in advance of the session to enable members to modify the agenda if necessary and to reconsider the need for the session to be held as scheduled.

Notes

[1] New York, Oxford University Press, 1999.

[2] Paris, 2000.

[3] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.90.XVII.11.

[4] "Inventory of statistical data-collection activities" (E/CN.3/AC.1/1993/R.6 of 7 July 1993); and "Joint data collection: 1998/1999 update" (CES/1999/19 of 23 March 1999).

[5] See "Main conclusions/agreements on the coordination of data-collection activities by the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and the Organizational Committee of ACC", unnumbered background paper prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division for the thirty-fourth session of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities (Washington, D.C., 20-22 September 2000).

[6] Statistical Papers, Series F, No. 28/Rev.1 (United Nations publication, forthcoming).

Annex I

Agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Adoption of the report of the thirty-fourth session.
3. Matters arising from the thirty-fourth session of the Subcommittee.
4. Major new initiatives planned by organizations.
5. Issues related to the work of the task forces and intersecretariat working groups.
6. Proposed common questionnaire for organizations to collect data on expenditure by visitors in countries.
7. Good practices in citation in the outputs of international statistical offices.
8. The statistics part of the ACC programme classification.
9. Placing statistics on the Internet and associated pricing policy.
10. Coordination of data sets that may be disseminated by different organizations covering the same subject matter.
11. Coordination of development indicators in the context of follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits.
12. Experiences with user-producer dialogues.
13. Reporting on the review of global progress towards the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.
14. Quality assurance for statistics in international statistical services.
15. Global integrated presentation of the work plans of the international organizations in statistical methodology.
16. Other matters relating to the Statistical Commission.
17. Subcommittee on Demographic Estimates and Projections.
18. Review of the ACC subsidiary machinery.
19. Other business:
    (a) Functioning of the Subcommittee;
    (b) Dates, place and agenda of the thirty-sixth session of the Subcommittee;
    (c) Identifying issues that the Statistical Commission might discuss;
    (d) Duplication of data collection from countries;
    (e) Coordination in the ECLAC region;
    (f) Country participation in the programmes for the World Census of Agriculture.

Annex II

List of participants

United Nations entities and programmes

Department of Economic and Social Affairs	
United Nations Statistics Division	Hermann Habermann Richard Roberts (Secretary)
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	Enrique Ordaz
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific	Andrew Flatt
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Hussein A. Sayed
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Henri Laurencin
United Nations Development Programme	Tom Griffin
United Nations Children's Fund	Gareth Jones (Chairman)
United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention	Adrian Moicean

Specialized agencies and related organizations

International Labour Organization	Sylvester Young
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Alvaro Gonzalez-Villalobos
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Denise Lievesley
World Health Organization	Alan Lopez
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Tetsuo Yamada

Other international and non-governmental organizations

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development	Denis Ward
World Tourism Organization	Antonio Massieu
World Trade Organization	Roslyn Jackson
Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States	Mikhail A. Korolev
Expert on indicators	Tim Holt

Annex III

List of documents

Document No.	*Agenda item(s)*	*Title or description*
SA/2001/1	1	Provisional agenda
SA/2001/1/Add.1	1	Proposed schedule of discussion
SA/2001/1/Add.2	1	Addendum to the provisional agenda
SA/2001/2	3	Report of the Bureau meeting, Washington,.D.C., 22 September 2000
SA/2001/3	3	Report of the Bureau meeting, New York, 7 March 2001
SA/2001/4	3	Matters arising from the thirty-fourth session of the Subcommittee: note by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2001/5	4	Major new initiatives planned by organizations: UNIDO statistical activities, 2001 — ongoing initiatives
SA/2001/5/Add.1	4	Major new initiatives planned by organizations: technical report on surveys in developing and transition countries: note by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2001/5/Add.2	4	Major new initiatives planned by organizations: establishment of a joint UNDP-ESCAP poverty monitoring project: note by ESCAP
SA/2001/5/Add.3	4	Major new initiatives planned by organizations: IMF update: reports on the observance of standards and codes and the data quality assessment framework
SA/2001/5/Add.4	4	Major new initiatives planned by organizations: strengthening statistical capacity in the ESCWA region: note by ESCWA
SA/2001/6	5	Issues related to the work of the task forces and intersecretariat working groups: Inter-Agency Task Force on Finance Statistics: note by IMF
SA/2001/6/Add.1	5	Issues related to the work of the task forces and intersecretariat working groups: Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics: note by the ILO
SA/2001/6/Add.2	5	Issues related to the work of the task forces and intersecretariat working groups: Task Force on International Trade Statistics: report by the World Trade Organization
SA/2001/6/Add.3	5	Issues related to the work of the task forces and intersecretariat working groups: Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services: report by OECD

Document No.	*Agenda item(s)*	*Title or description*
SA/2001/7	6	Proposed common questionnaire for organizations to collect data on expenditure by visitors in countries: research on international experience in measuring tourism expenditure associated with inbound tourism: report by the World Tourism Organization
SA/2001/8	7	Good practices in citation in the outputs of international statistical offices (not issued)
SA/2001/9	8	Classification of statistics and statistical activities (the statistics part of the ACC programme classification): note by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2001/10	9	Dissemination of data on the Internet and the associated pricing policy: note by OECD
SA/2001/11	10	Coordination of data sets disseminated by more than one organization (not issued)
SA/2001/12	11	Coordination of development indicators in the context of follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits: note by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2001/13	12	Experiences with user-producer dialogues: note by Eurostat
SA/2001/13/Add.1	12	Experiences with user-producer dialogues: note by IMF
SA/2001/14	13	Reporting on the review of global progress towards the Millennium Declaration goals: note by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2001/14/Add.1	13	Reporting on the review of global progress towards the Millennium Declaration goals: synthesis of discussion on the Habitat millennium goal indicators: note by Habitat
SA/2001/15	16	Other matters relating to the Statistical Commission: note by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2001/16	18	Review of the ACC machinery: note by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2001/17	19 (c)	Identifying issues that the Statistical Commission might discuss: note by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2001/18	19 (d)	Duplication of data collection from countries: note by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2001/18/Add.1	19 (d)	Duplication of data collection from countries: English translation of response by Colombia to request on duplication of data collection

Document No.	*Agenda item(s)*	*Title or description*
SA/2001/18/Add.2	19 (d)	Duplication of data collection from countries: comments by the Commissioner of the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics
SA/2001/19	14	Quality assurance for statistics in international statistical services: note by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2001/20	19 (f)	Country participation in the Programmes for the World Census of Agriculture: note by FAO
SA/2001/21	4 and 12	Major new initiatives planned by organizations and experiences with user-producer dialogues: note by FAO
SA/2000/10	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by the United Nations Population Division
SA/2000/10/Add.1	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by the UNDP Human Development Report Office
SA/2000/10/Add.2	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by the United Nations Statistics Division
SA/2000/10/Add.3	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by the World Tourism Organization
SA/2000/10/Add.4	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by FAO
SA/2000/10/Add.5	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by the World Trade Organization
SA/2000/10/Add.6	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by the ILO
SA/2000/10/Add.7	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by ESCAP
SA/2000/10/Add.8	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by UNIDO
SA/2000/10/Add.9	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by ECE
SA/2000/10/Add.10	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by OECD
SA/2000/10/Add.11	14	Quality assurance, arrangements with common questionnaire and conflicting statistics: note by the World Bank

Document No.	*Agenda item(s)*	*Title or description*
ACC/2000/16	2, 3	Report of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on its thirty-fourth session, 20-22 September 2000, Washington, D.C.
Unnumbered	5	Meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Finance Statistics, Frankfurt, 11-13 October 2000 (prepared by IMF)
Unnumbered	5	Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics: minutes of the third meeting of the Technical Expert Group for updating the Manual on Consumer Price Indices, Washington, D.C., 5-6 February 2001 (prepared by the ILO)
Unnumbered	5	Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics: minutes of the fourth meeting of the Technical Expert Group for updating the Manual on Consumer Price Indices, Geneva, 25-26 June 2001 (prepared by the ILO)
Unnumbered	5	Minutes of the Task Force on International Trade Statistics, Beirut, 27-29 March 2001 (prepared by the World Trade Organization)
Unnumbered	5	Reports of the twelfth and thirteenth meetings of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services, Paris, 13 December 2000 and 3-4 May 2001 (prepared by OECD)
Unnumbered	5	Introduction to the report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services to the Statistical Commission 2001 (prepared by OECD)
Unnumbered	19 (e)	Briefing note on the first United Nations Inter-Agency Technical Coordination Meeting on Regional Statistical Information, Santiago, 8 May 2001 (prepared by ECLAC)
Unnumbered	11	Draft report on an assessment of the statistical indicators derived from United Nations summit meetings (prepared by the Friends of the Chair of the Statistical Commission for the thirty-third session of the Commission)

Annex IV

Letter dated 25 June 2001 from the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division to the Secretary of ACC responding to the new approaches advocated by the High-level Committee on Programmes

1. I refer to Mr. Civili's letter to me of 3 May 2001, in which he reported on the outcomes of the first regular session of the High-level Committee on Programmes relating to the review of the subsidiary machinery of ACC, including some specific questions concerning inter-agency activities in statistics. Mr. Civili asked that my response to his letter be directed to you.

2. Consultations were held by email with members and observers of the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities during the period 14-22 June 2001, based on Mr. Civili's letter, the report of the High-level Committee on Programmes on its first regular session and a note that had been provided to Mr. Civili by the secretariat of the Subcommittee on 19 January 2001 on the functioning and outputs of the Subcommittee. The present letter reflects those consultations.

3. The ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities welcomes the fact that the High-level Committee on Programmes recognized that the areas covered by the existing ACC machinery correspond to areas where organized inter-agency cooperation remains necessary; that view is shared strongly by the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities in relation to the statistical area.

4. The Subcommittee is committed to responding in a positive way to the new approaches advocated by the High-level Committee on Programmes; the Subcommittee notes that much of its modus operandi is already consistent with what is advocated but recognizes that further effort in the directions advocated is desirable and possible.

5. The Subcommittee's work over the years has largely been agenda-driven and output-driven, but the Subcommittee has always considered that regular formal meetings are important to maintain a broad-based collaborative framework; the agendas of meetings have been broad in coverage and dynamic — the work of the organizations in statistics is characterized by change, including most recently the need to respond to the statistical demands emanating from the major United Nations conferences and the necessary work on indicators requested by the Economic and Social Council; the agendas have invited and indeed required attendance at the meetings by most if not all members of the Subcommittee; the agendas are set in a very flexible way and adjusted right up to the opening of sessions to reflect emerging needs and problems. Bilateral and multilateral contact continues throughout the year on specific issues, and email is the standard technology for communication. The concept of task managers and lead agencies is applied, largely based on organizational responsibilities and on interest or the special skills and knowledge of individual Subcommittee members; this is reflected in the fact that documents for the Subcommittee are prepared by a range of organizations. The most important non-United Nations organizations involved in international statistical activities have the status of permanent observers in the Subcommittee and are very actively involved in the work of the Subcommittee, virtually on the same basis as United Nations member organizations.

6. In response to the call of the High-level Committee on Programmes, the Subcommittee will apply rigorously the principle of organizing its meetings on an as-needed basis. However, the Subcommittee believes that, in general, the meetings will continue to have agendas that call for the widest participation by organizations and representation at the highest level, i.e., directors of statistics divisions. The Subcommittee believes that participation by all members is essential to maintain the fabric and culture of coordination that has been developed. The Bureau of the Subcommittee meets each year when the United Nations Statistical Commission meets; however, a "full ACC Subcommittee" meeting, at the time of an intergovernmental meeting, such as the Statistical Commission, is not considered feasible given the other demands that exist on all subcommittee members, especially on the Secretariat (the United Nations Statistics Division), at the time of the Statistical Commission. However, the Subcommittee could consider a limited meeting on a single or limited issues around the time of the Statistical Commission. The Subcommittee agrees on the need for periodic evaluation of its work overall and in specific areas. The Subcommittee recognizes the costs that are involved in coordination work, but to date has concluded that the costs are moderate in relation to the positive results.

7. The Subcommittee welcomes the arrangements set out in paragraphs 29 and 30 on flexible reporting and an activist approach by the High-level Committee on Programmes.

8. The Subcommittee proposes to meet as scheduled from 18-20 September 2001 with the attached draft provisional agenda.

9. The final request in Mr. Civili's letter concerned activities related to the follow-up to United Nations conferences and the United Nations Millennium Declaration. I would refer to the work being done by the United Nations Statistics Division and the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities on the harmonization and rationalization of indicators in the context of follow-up to United Nations conferences, as called for by Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/27 (see E/CN.3/2001/16 and SA/2000/9). That work has been reported to CCPOQ by the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities in recent years (see ACC/2000/16, paras. 15 and 16; ACC/1999/16, paras. 2 (c) and 16; and ACC/1998/14, para. 2 (a)). I would also refer to the proposed reporting by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on review of global progress towards the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Both sets of work involve issues of statistical reporting and statistical capacity-building of concern to the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and are included on the agenda of the Subcommittee's meeting scheduled for 18-20 September 2001.

(*Signed*) Hermann **Habermann**
Director
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